



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Reply to
Attn Of: ECL-117

U.S. Senator Patty Murray
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-4704

Dear Senator Murray:

Your correspondence to Ms. Stephanie N. Daigle, Associate Administrator of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, dated August 14, 2007, was forwarded to the Region 10 Environmental Protection Agency in Seattle, Washington for a response. Your letter requests that we address the issues outlined in Mr. Ken Reisinger's correspondence regarding his drinking water source. According to your letter, his drinking water was contaminated and he has no water source.

I have carefully reviewed all of the correspondence attached to your letter. Rod Lobos from my staff has spoken with Mr. Dave George, the Washington State Department of Ecology Project Manager for the site, as well as with Mr. Reisinger on the afternoon of Friday September 7, 2007, to get a better idea of his concerns. We regret the frustration that Mr. Reisinger has had to experience in trying to resolve issues with groundwater contamination and his health concerns.

The letter from his daughter Ms. Mai-Lee Reisinger mentions the Pasco Sanitary landfill (PSL) as a source of groundwater contamination. The PSL site is on the National Priorities List, and is being cleaned up under the Washington State Department of Ecology Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) authority. The PSL site is located about 1.5 miles northeast of Pasco, Washington. The groundwater beneath and downgradient of PSL is contaminated with a variety of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The site is being managed by the Pasco Sanitary Landfill PLP Group under agreed and enforcement orders with the State of Washington. The lead agency for the cleanup is the Washington State Department of Ecology. EPA is available to provide assistance if requested.

Mr. Reisinger is on a private well that is not regulated by the EPA. However, he continues to have his water tested on a quarterly basis, and I understand that additional monitoring wells have been installed recently to test the water in the area. Mr. Dave George reviewed the latest groundwater sample results for Mr. Reisinger's well that he uses for domestic water on September 7, 2007. Mr. Reisinger's well continues to meet federal drinking water standards, but does not meet the more stringent standards of the Model Toxics Control Act and the corresponding cleanup level for VOCs. The Washington State Department of Ecology, the Pasco Landfill PLP Group, and the Benton Franklin Health District have repeatedly asked Mr. Reisinger to discontinue his use of

well water for domestic purposes and to begin using city water or bottled water as a precaution. The Pasco Sanitary Landfill PLP group has had a standing offer to Mr. Reisinger to provide alternate sources of drinking water at no cost to him. There are six residences that are currently affected by VOCs in the groundwater, and five of those residences are receiving water from the City of Pasco. Mr. Reisinger is the only one who continues to refuse the alternate sources of domestic water that have been offered to him.

Ms. Mai-Lee Reisinger's belief that crops grown across the street from her father's house have the potential to absorb chemicals in the groundwater and be ingested by people is a valid concern. This concern was identified some time ago, and was the reason for a study that was conducted in the early 1990s. The completed study evaluated that specific exposure pathway and concluded it was a non-issue because the volatile organic compounds were volatilized (passed off as a vapor) during irrigation.

EPA agrees with the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Pasco Landfill PLP Group, and the Benton Franklin Health District. We hope that Mr. Reisinger will discontinue his use of contaminated well water and allow his domestic water to be provided by the City of Pasco.

We are enclosing two letters, a joint letter from the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Benton Franklin Health District, and the Pasco Landfill PLP Group as well as one from the PLP Group. These letters explain the offers of alternative domestic water being made to Mr. Reisinger.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Opalski, Director
Office of Environmental Cleanup

Enclosures (2)